



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **HONDURAN SENTENCED IN HOSTAGE TAKING CONSPIRACY**

### *Ninth of Twelve Defendants Charged in 2003 Case*

PHOENIX – Edil Orlando Guillen-Pineda, 25, of Honduras, was sentenced here today to ten years in prison by U.S. District Judge Neil V. Wake. Guillen-Pineda had pleaded guilty on August 16, 2005 to Brandishing of a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence (Hostage Taking).

Paul K. Charlton, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona stated that “Violence against illegal aliens by their coyotes is on the rise. This type of cruel treatment toward other human beings is intolerable.”

Thirty-three illegal aliens were held hostage at a north 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue residence in Phoenix on October 22, 2003. The Phoenix Police Department located the residence while investigating multiple shootings at a west Phoenix restaurant that occurred on October 20, 2003. Also located at the residence were two rifles. While the illegal aliens were held at the residence they were threatened with death and had guns pointed at them in order to force them to get someone to pay their ransom.

Guillen-Pineda is the ninth of 12 defendants to be sentenced. The 12 defendants were charged with Hostage Taking, Harboring Undocumented Aliens, Conspiracy to Take Hostages and Conspiracy to Harbor Undocumented Aliens. Two of the 12, Rigoberto Franco-Aragon and Hector Diaz-Osuna, remain at large.

Mario Tirado-Sandoval, Rosalio Franco-Perez, Marcy Zuniga-Catellanos, Placido Antonio Salazar-Salazar and Rene Alexi Martinez-Pozas pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens and were sentenced to 33 months, 46 months, 46 months, 63 months and 22 months respectively for their role in the conspiracy. Ricardo Najera-Escobar, Eziquio Najera-Escobar and Andres Njera-Escobar all pleaded guilty to Brandishing of a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence (Hostage Taking). These three defendants were each sentenced to 84 months in prison. Rosalio Franco-Perez currently faces the death penalty on charges in Maricopa County Superior Court for the shootings that occurred at the west Phoenix Restaurant on October 20, 2003. The final defendant is pending sentencing in March 2006.

The investigation in this case was conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Phoenix Police Department. The prosecution was handled by Lisa Jennis Settel Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-1188-PHX-NVW  
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